

The Armenian Churches are very gorgeous; their Cathedral had a very bare, whitewashed ceiling, but the walls were covered with blue and white tiles, and the doors were of inlaid mother of pearl and tortise shell—quite lovely. There was a good deal of tapestry, and countless lamps suspended from ostrich eggs—which are symbolical of concentrated thought in prayer. On leaving their churches the guardian at the door anoints one's hands with delicious rose-water. The city is simply swarming with pilgrims of every kind. A whole crowd of Coptic Christians were deck passengers on board the much-to-be-abused ——. I think Cook's men here have got sick of the name of that dreadful ship! Luckily we insured our luggage, and we hope to get back our premium on my box, which was gnawed by a rat on the ——. They fumigated the hold, which nearly killed us, and, I suppose, drove the rats to pastures new!

From yours, —

LETTER TO THE EDITOR.

DEAR EDITOR,

May I draw the attention of your readers to the approaching *Conversazione*, which will be held on June 8th. Every ex-student as a life member of the Union has already been sent an invitation, and will, I hope, have noticed the extremely interesting syllabus of Miss Mason's paper. Any student who is able to come up and would like to be offered hospitality should write to me as soon as possible.

Our annual Conference will take place this year at the end of October. We hope that the mid-term holiday may be utilized for attending it wherever the distance will allow. All information concerning the Conference will be published in the "*Parents' Review*," or can be had on application to Miss Armfield or to myself.

Yours faithfully,

H. FRANKLIN,
Hon. Organising Sec., P.N.E.U.

ANOTHER POINT OF VIEW.

I should like to add one more to the various side-lights which have been thrown upon the students—one from the point of view of the ex-student parent. It is many years since I went full of hope and eagerness as a junior to the House of Education, and now as a superannuated senior, looking back from some distance upon several years of teaching, may I be allowed my say?

After having been a student one knows, only too well, how many human weaknesses can lurk beneath the title; but, justly, perhaps, as Ambleside girls may sometimes be found fault with, one cannot help wishing that their critics could, for even a few days, step into their shoes. Not a few, mothers among them, would find it an exhausting experiment, even where their own children are concerned.

We have been reminded lately that, among other things, students sometimes lose their enthusiasm when they enter upon their lives as governesses—that they no longer read for self-improvement and so on. Enthusiasm is easy and natural when you are one of some thirty girls all interested in the same hobbies and working for the same end; but let us consider what are some of the chief features of the great change that occurs when a student becomes a governess in a family. In the first place there is the altogether new atmosphere, with responsibilities of teaching and management which she so far knows only from having shared them with other students,—she is surrounded by people who know nothing of her strongest ties and old friends,—and is bound, very possibly for the first time in her life, to spend the day almost wholly in the society of children, which is itself a most searching, and sometimes irksome occupation, whether we think well to admit it or not.

In reply we shall be told quite fairly that all this is what the life of a governess implies, and is that for which her salary is received. It is so; but it makes the trial no less a severe one, especially when it comes as a comparatively new experience.

Then again, students, during their two years' training are being saturated with theories of education, with philosophy

and psychology, and in general are giving themselves up to a rigorous though delightful training.

It is most natural that this high state of tension should find relief in strong reaction, and that one should turn, almost with alacrity, from human nature as it appears in books to a study of it at first hand, as it shows itself in the children round us.

Why not gladly, and most considerately, allow a student, specially when fresh from College, to leave literature if she will, except such as she requires for her lessons (that will often be enough after a day's work) and keep herself, by resting in the evening from what has been the day's train of thought and effort, refreshed and alert for her pupils, using whatever reasonable means of recreation she prefers. Happy intercourse with children will best grow in her an enthusiasm for human nature itself, which is, after all, the *raison d'être* of all the literature concerning it and the end to which all educational philosophy tries to lead us.

From one or two remarks that I have heard lately it would appear that students are sometimes imagined by their employers to leave Ambleside able to teach anything and everything in the best possible way. Now whatever the Ambleside training does (and I cannot speak too enthusiastically or too gratefully of all it meant in my own case) it cannot give girls that easy familiarity with many subjects that comes only from years of experience in teaching them; nor, if we mothers think a moment, is it desirable that they should be so equipped, or be expected to undertake such all-round cultivation of their young charges.

Education has done much; but can we say that at present it has tended to draw more closely what should be that almost closest of all ties—that of mother and child? Often and often one sees or hears of cases in which the culture and interests, especially of daughters, seems to drive them to seek sympathetic companionship outside their own homes—and whatever fault may fairly be laid to the daughters' share, I cannot but think that a mother could do much to prevent the growth of this horrid severance if she could let her children grow up with the feeling that she and they were interested actively in the same things, and that it was quite natural that she and they should be found, not on rare occasions only, working at the same subjects. A governess would be more than human if she

could teach all subjects with equal interest and always feel as bright and ready as she would like for, say, a nature walk, a singing class, or a sewing lesson. Why should not all mothers fit themselves, as I know some do, to take their children in two or three subjects besides the Bible Lesson, not in order to spare their governess, but just for their own sakes, to make it the easier for them to keep their children theirs essentially, and not only outwardly? Would Public School life or High School life, or any after life, however absorbing, be able to break the strong links, formed by the happy associations that come from working and studying and poring over things together.

Mothers were made for such work, and they know quite well that no outside interests and schemes, however philanthropic, excuse them for leaving it alone. I believe every student will agree with me that nothing would so help to keep her up to the mark, nothing so inspirit her in anytime of strain or discouragement, as the feeling that the mother of the home was no mere critic of her methods of handling or of teaching the children, but a teacher-learner like herself, knowing from her own experience the difficulties that may beset even one hour's teaching, and that to go on enthusiastically and thoroughly from week's end to week's end requires an amount of unselfishness and devotion of which those who only theorise about teaching can have no conception.

Just as each year has its spring and summer and autumn and winter, so, I think, we one and all find that we pass through some such life phases, and we learn to feel not altogether downcast when times of seeming stagnation and deadness arrive, and enthusiasm perhaps seems a thing of the past, knowing from glad experience that Life will kindle again, and that we shall once more take up our chosen work with a zest that seems unaccountable even to ourselves. These springtimes arrive for each in an individual way, but with many of us not chiefly has it been when keeping our minds seething with the latest educational pamphlets and discussions, but while we possess our souls in patience, and allow ourselves to feel that power of inward rest and silence which seems to be the atmosphere in which all the best purposes and affections of our lives have their birth.

BEATRICE E. MORTON.